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IT IS DAY—the first of the third month. Con-cubar comes from a potential state into new life. The truths and secrets of ocean, earth, firmament give constant interest; creatures of water, wood, air, much pleasure; sunshine, rain, snow, equal value and delight—for, what in Nature is not good? At times he climbs the mountains, hunts the forests, fishes the streams—takes from the storms their energy and reads tidings in the heights.

“OLD MAN THOMPSON”

— BY —
CONCUBAR



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BY DANIEL P. CONNOR,
MANCHESTER, N. H.

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IT IS NIGHT. Concubar sits in his Maple street home by the banks of the picturesque Merrimack river. In spirit he wanders back to the mountains of this his native place—"The Granite State." In imagination he sees sublime beauty, again stands in their midst with two Indian friends — and — who name them in the different dialects of the aborigine, — "WAMBEK MENTHA," "AGIO-CHOOK," which mean, "MOUNTAINS WITH SNOWY FOREHEADS,"—while facts of personal reminiscence and symbols of associate friendship indulge dreams.

DANIEL P. CONNOR.

Manchester, N. H.

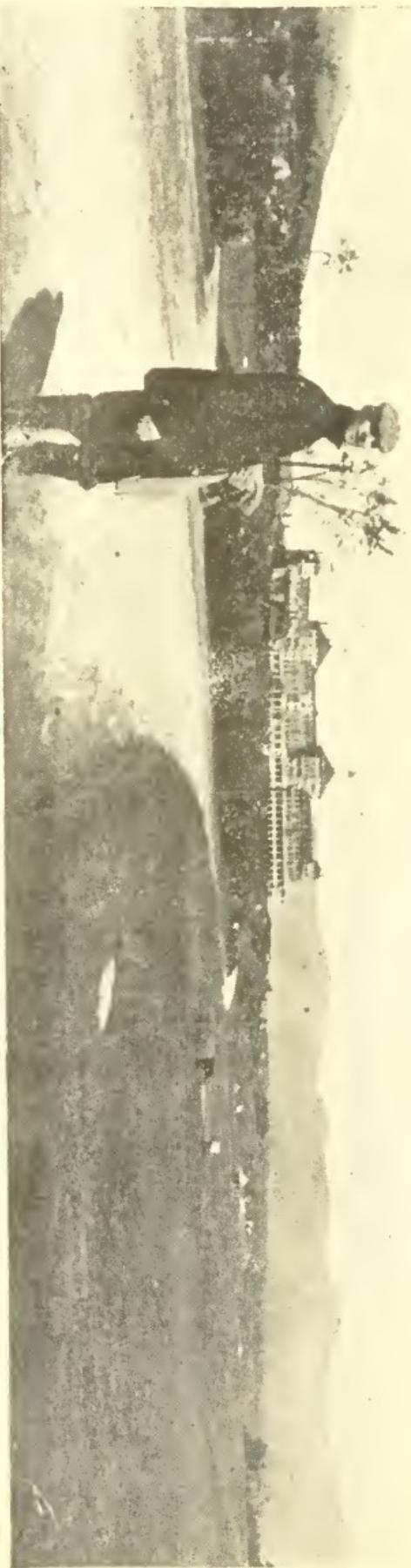
“Old Man Thompson”

IN a small cottage, near a road which runs along the northern base of Mt. Agassiz, Bethlehem, New Hampshire, lived a keen-eyed, quiet-mannered, very aged man. During the resort's season—for it was known as the highest New-England village with a world reputation as a hay fever paradise—he catered to the leisure wants of the sight-seekers who traveled between twenty-six hotels or boarding houses and a steel observatory on the mountain. The summer demand for cool drinks,—made from roots and herbs gathered by himself—pine maple sugar, fruit, or purchase of an artistic alpenstock, were, therefore, agreeably easy means of informal introduction. Among the accumulate throng of tourists, however, few were aware that previous to comparative inaction, which extended some years before his death at ninety-five, this remarkable individual followed the avocation and duties of Nature. Love for and study of it blended with inherited service—he was a trapper and guide, like his father.

Devoutly gifted the true catholicity of outdoor life should have produced wonderful resignation, still there alternated for him ecstasy and gloom in subtle mystery. Lest you mistake the character briefly pictured it is well to bear in mind that no nobler specimen of native breeding ever struggled amid the ruggedness of beloved granite hills, within whose rare atmosphere and sublime grandeur he labored and lived all his days. Lithe, sinewy and of iron constitution; tough as a tree of the forest's exposed vicinity,—confirmed by personal claim that he “reached the sixtieth year without feeling fatigue”—such was manhood's prime. To enable a measure of endurance, likewise show phases of career and friendship, let me take you to the kindness of his out-shop, where, under the hospitable shade of apple trees were found red painted board benches for the accommodation of weary patrons.

¶ It was a late sultry June afternoon when two favorite boys, with a younger sister, returning to a distant mountain lodge home, after youth's long session at school, stepped in to rest and be entertained with the following tale:

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Presidential Range, White Mountains.

The Lost Flume

A GOOD many years ago, when Bethlehem was only a cluster of houses, and there was plenty game in the woods, I was at North Woodstock and left to cross the mountains, almost directly over Lafayette and Garfield. It was a very hot day for the middle of December. When I started out it looked as if I was going to have some good weather. The first day I got away from level country and by noon the next was well up the side of the mountain. It became cloudy about two o'clock and soon began to snow. Shortly after I ran right into a fresh bear track. From the size of the footprints I knew it was a very large one. I started on it, thinking that the animal could not be far ahead or else the imprints would be covered with snow which was falling fast. The tracks kept twisting down the mountain, and, after about two miles, turned directly around and followed the bank of a small stream which led up to what looked from there, a gorge in the range. The trail kept along the water, and, after a while, I found myself in a deep val-

ley with steep sides. It was late and getting dark fast. The tracks were becoming more and more indistinct, so I decided to give up and seek a place to camp. I had hardly made up my mind when it suddenly drew extremely dark and the wind began to blow and tear in driving sheets of blinding snow and ice. I wandered around for what seemed a week, searching for a sheltered place, but there was none to be found in the awful darkness. I kept on going, almost driven by the force of the wind, which, with the darkness, made it possible to proceed only by feeling my way. I was nearly frozen and had I fallen down would have stayed there to die, likely as not, when, unexpectedly, I stumbled into an open space. There was no snow on the ground, no wind at all and dry leaves rustled under my feet. It was warm and fine after being out in the storm. I built a fire of leaves and sticks which were scattered around. From the light I saw that it was a kind of cave about ten feet wide and eighteen deep. Where I stood was a little higher than myself but it slanted to about a foot on the opposite side and a large boulder almost blocked the front. In

a little while I went to the opening and glanced out. The storm was still raging but above it I could hear, somewhere, the roar of water. I retired to my comfortable surprise and never so enjoyed rest and sleep —choice luck. The morning after the storm I stepped out to see a most beautiful sight. There I was in a regular flume, walls straight on either side, and just above, a picturesque waterfall rushing over a precipice in a perfect sheet and splashing on the rocks below. The sun shining on the spray, the drifts of snow and the swiftness of the stream were great. I glanced at it for a while, then went down, dreaming how I would build a road up to it some day and make a fortune.”

¶ Primitive instincts and emotions rhymed to the mountaineer’s soft recital. As he mused over the finished prayer of hope and fancy ran free in companions there was silence. Presently came tuning to a gentler croon, a loftier object, as the bright Miss met a social obligation and adorned the highest peak in the vicinity and North Appalachian Range with a modernized legend. In the charm of written and practiced effort she cited how a little girl in the locality was

transformed from the miseries of trying orphanage to the ideal state of fairyhood, and with the veteran at close attention continued.

The New Fairy

“**A**FTER Love Good had become a New Fairy she was given a month’s time in which to enjoy herself and get accustomed to the life. So, on a clear, beautiful day she climbed on the back of a butterfly and asked it to fly to that mountain of the Presidential Range called Washington. On the way the butterfly told her that many years ago, when this land was inhabited by giants and witches, the former used the interior of the mountain for a treasure chest. One after another they deposited all their gold and jewels until, at last, the mountain was full. There was one giant larger and stronger than the rest. Being greedy he, of course, coveted the wealth and planned how to get it for himself. The rest, although smaller, were just as avaricious. After fighting over it for many days this one, whose name was Axael, said: ‘Let us all go to the summit and each slide to the

bottom. The one who does it in the least time shall have the treasure.’ They agreed. Axael selected a large flat stone for each to sit upon and started them, in turn, down the treacherous slope. He was cunning and picked out a dangerous route so that each was killed as he reached the bottom. With all the spoil he thought that he would be happy but it was a selfish mistake. Fear that the witches would steal it begun to worry him day and night. To keep it safe he spent many long years covering it up with earth and rocks, until this one was larger than any of the White Mountains.

¶ One day, while on the mountain, he slipped and went down the very place his comrades had gone before, meeting a just and deserving fate. Many years after, when the first white man* discovered this mountain, he found a heap of bones at the foot of the path, which he supposed were the remains of Indians, and the course that of an ancient landslide called Tuckerman Ravine. In reality it was the path the giants made going down the mountain.”

* Darby Field—an Irishman—was the first white man to climb Mount Washington. He did it in June, 1642 accompanied by two Indians.

¶ Do not depart with the young folks because to the same spot, if not scene, you will be mentally drawn through this evidence of superior knowledge and endowment and its opportunity for humane estimate.

¶ “The first time I saw the man was a rather hot day. He was tilted on a chair just outside the door of the house—in the yard of which he sold goods—smoking a black pipe and reading. He hardly noticed when I entered and sat down on one of the benches. In time he put the newspaper aside and, without looking at me drew a handful of peanuts from his pocket, shelled some and threw them on the ground over toward the back of the building. Proceeding in this manner until the kernels were all scattered about he then made a noise, which sounded to me like a squirrel scolding at something from a tree. I kept watching without saying anything. Two chipmunks came out from under the house to gather the nuts. All being disposed of they began turning around for more. One surprised me by going up his leg, diving into his pocket and carrying away a nut. Afterwards I found that it was not unusual to see five or six of

them playing over him at the same time. He had a red squirrel in a cage. I had tried to keep several but they died so I asked the secret of success. His advice was to catch one in a box trap, put it in a cage and not let it eat or drink for twenty-four hours. Then mix a dose of molasses with half r—and when over the effect it will have forgotten its wild life. It was one of the many things I learned from him about trapping, hunting, and fishing, and training wild animals.”

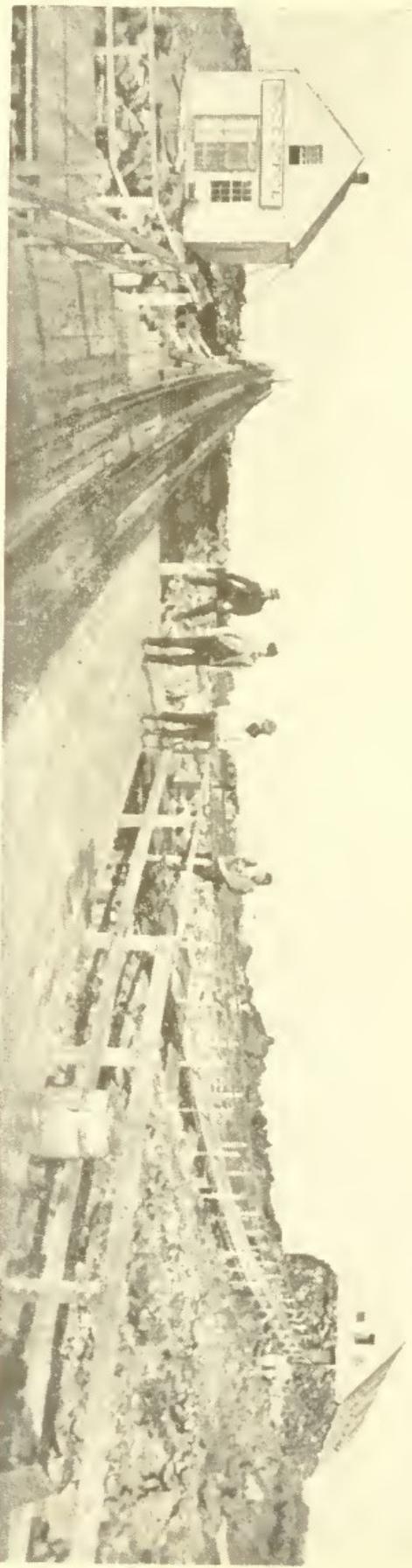
The Sermon on the Mt.

TO see him in a different role transport yourself to a car on the Mount Washington steam incline railroad. In your mind’s eye notice an accidental group, paired thus: a clerical misfit,—who took every chance to expound on his transcendent feelings and curious introspection,—and a quiet, pensive, guide-companion—guest: a handsome, astute woman and her intelligent eight-year-old daughter,—with a party of friends.

The guide intuitively sensed Nature’s providential degrees and ends as he was long since tamed to patience by its inevitable dis-

cipline. During the intimated engagement he made many futile attempts to reconcile to proper premises reasoning which brought to light the subjective dreams of the man with whom he shared recreation. A question, reflecting the clergyman's state of mind and the guide's common sense, was taking the trip. Clash of words together with commingled scene and soul gave a sort of refined acquaintanceship. Does not the discord of a peasant chorus in a valley come to ears on adjacent mountain top in perfect harmony; common inspiration and interest make people friends? The train merged from a transient cloud formation to the summit's miraculous splendor. Minds were drawn from argument to the precocious Miss who, under the spell of phenomena, exclaimed: “Isn't it perfectly wonderful?” Mother took her hand and said “Yes it is beautiful and I will tell you a story. There was a gentleman traveling in the Rocky Mountains. One day he met a holy monk, and on expressing his surprise at finding so feeble a person in that wild country the priest made answer. “Some months ago I was at death's door. One night I had a

Summit of Mount Washington—Highest Peak of the White Mountains.



dream and I thought our Lord said to me: ‘These many years you have been preaching of a better land and yet you have never taken the trouble to notice the glorious country in which you have a place.’ ‘Then and there,’ said the monk, ‘I vowed that if my health were restored I would learn to appreciate this world. On my recovery I started on my journey and when I again meet my master I shall know how to thank Him for blessings.’ ”

¶ The lesson, so aptly imparted, had good results. It calmed the excited mood of a responsive temperament, squared with the guide’s idea and vindicated his philosophy. In gracious facial approval he smilingly turned to host and remarked, ““You ought to profit by that Sermon on the Mount.””

The Last Wolf

FAMED for droll reminiscence and ingenious method there was yet another thing which made him a marked man. It was that he killed the last wolf in the White Mountains. Although no follower of major sport will experience the thrill of such a chase, or its special distinction, before that

dawn when Nature's regulation will have welcomed a fated pack into the region of exile, still in it you have an important symbol. The drama of life, power, time, was written in the solitary magnificence of the mountains. The doom of many and the end of much were figured in that play of death. The wolf used every maternal tactics of single and collective cunning until, of multiple ferocity, she was left to face a fine-bred sportsman,—the enemy? Type within a type she becomes when you consider an expression of christian dispensation and its higher evolution. Classified, through circumstance, with the Timber wolf of independent resourcefulness, she roamed alone—supreme. In isolated abundance there was no need of note of sharp warning, food summons or hunger cry. Nevertheless you wonder why she was deaf to the call of the north and west where kin lived in the safety of the wilderness. What hope of retribution or fond memory caused her to frequent a vast estate—fatherland. At any rate ancestral traits and unlimited range were pitted against an authority on animal psychology, sharpshooter and geographer of track

and trail. A tedious hunt of calculated detail or an end of quick dispatch matters little over foes forever vanquished by the same peaceful rest. With weird zest for odd fun came a meaning. More so when you know that from now on there was problem above pastime. As in the past, shadows traced their fantasies on mellow moonbeams; winds sung myriad leafed melody through the trees; seven voiced thunder lost naught in the storm's symphony; brooks rippled as varied a harmony as music of birds; earth and firmament gave——beauty and value; creatures of wood, water, air, afforded enterprising inducement and pleasure but they offered a different appeal. Even an accident in twilight's last eve continued the essential change, and,

¶ Hush!

¶ Final orders were to be obeyed. Almighty Nature, with its source and seal of everything, neared the feeble hunter. With calm heroism he drew gracefully away from inner life's inconstant test to investigate the revelation beyond, when suddenly, the mountains became more beautiful to
“OLD MAN THOMPSON”



“OLD MAN THOMPSON”

January 23, 1814

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The Last Great Guide and Trapper
of the White Mountains

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